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342

The third morning of a divorce debate.

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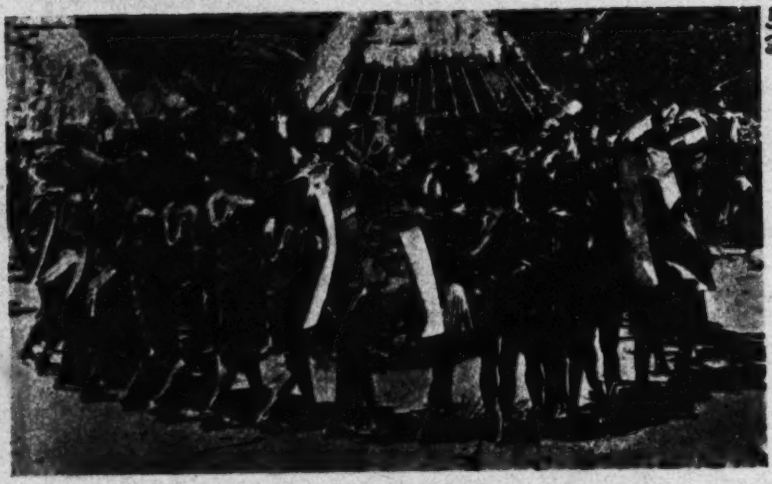
293



The people of Atimelang prefer their circle dances (*lego-lego*) to last from dusk to dawn. Dandies wear tubular headdresses and carabao parrying shields. As the group circles in unison men and women try to slip inconspicuously into the circle next to their favorite partners.

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855 to replenish the fire and tell his dream to the household. Often a pot is
513 placed on the fire for a midnight snack at this time.

There is also a good deal of movement in the village at night. Men have been out discussing finance; boys have been out courting, and when they return there is inevitably a certain amount of disturbance.
[538] There are also the night dances, which average one every eight days throughout the year, and during the dry season from June through October may average as many as one every five or six nights. Many
[857] children even of five years or less are taken to these dances and they snatch what sleep they can.

Those who can be left at home in someone's care must sleep less soundly because of the coming and going and the sound of singing all night. It is a common sight to see children taking cat naps at all times. Sometimes they lean back between the legs or against the side of a seated parent who is chatting with guests. Often they crawl off under the eaves with small companions and doze for a time, only to wake up and rejoin the adults. Toddlers learn to sleep anytime and anywhere except on the ground, which they already know is taboo. Children barely two or three years old are often seen sleeping quite alone on a verandah during the day. Their rest even more than their food is a matter of small concern and casual attention from adults.

TALKING

868 Satisfactory information on talking is scant. When crying for attention most children of one or two years will intersperse their cries with rhythmic wails that sound as though they were trying to say,
[195] "Mother, mother, alack, alas (*niae, niae, adiye, adiye*)," which is the formalized type of wailing used by adults, especially women, in connection with deaths and catastrophes. These words are used also as general expressions of consternation. In terms of adult psychology, it is interesting that the cry of distress should, by formalization, be directed to the mother.

Another word that is learned very early is the imperative for *give* (*mo*). Children who are just beginning to walk can be seen holding out their hands, usually in the direction of food, and saying "Mo!" over and over again. There is little doubt that children from two to four years are in command of sufficient vocabulary to make their wishes
195 known. Under the stimulus of rage even five-year-olds are quite fluent
868 in their use of imprecations. One little boy whose aunt was trying to
865 make him carry a basket to his mother when he was more interested in playing, turned on her and said, "Evil spirit, evil spirit! May you have

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to eat. They said, "Mother, it smells of feces." She answered, "Then go to the privy to eat." They went to the privy but still smelled feces. When they returned to the center of the house, they still smelled them. Then they saw that feces were mixed with the millet and refused to eat. 539

The mother said to the youngest son, "Take this food and eat it." Thereupon he demanded of his mother all his adult male regalia [sword, bow, arrows, shields, plumes, and the like, the dialogue concerning which forms the bulk of the story]. When he was fully accoutered, he ran from the house, saying, "My mother cooked millet and feces for me to eat." He ran off toward the sea. His mother wept and followed him, saying, "It would be nice if you returned, my child." But he refused, reproaching her once more with her deed.

On the beach he deloused his mother and she fell asleep during the process. He then went out to the reef and summoned sea spirits to wake his mother with a wave. When the wave nudged his mother awake she pled once more for her son's return. Again he refused, repeating the story of her ill treatment.

As the son began his ascent from the sea to the sky [to become the morning star] he instructed his mother to prepare the cornfields of his brothers and to weed for them. His mother made one more attempt to bring him back by shoving a pole out to him on the reef, but it did not reach him.

PLAY, PRIVILEGE, AND RESPONSIBILITY

Aside from the described differences in relation to food, no sharp distinctions are made in bringing up boys and girls, and there is no formal segregation. Children play a great deal. Girls emphasize food-gathering activities and cooking; boys emphasize hunting. It is noteworthy that the children have many games and toys, some of which are very ingenious—for example, a pressure squirt gun that is fashioned of bamboo. 857

The children's aptitude in games stands in contrast to that of adults, who play no games at all and whose recreation is confined to dances, ceremonial gatherings, and, for men, gong beating. I made no exhaustive survey of children's games and toys, but of a casual list of twenty-one items all but two were used by both sexes. The exceptions were cat's cradle, which was a girl's game, and wooden tops, which were for boys.* [524] [535] [524]

This list excludes the games imitating adult activities, which are a large part of play. Here, as among adults, one finds that skills may be

* Compare sex differences in the subject matter of the children's drawings in Chapter 22.

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to those of her husband, this was a singularly loyal and romantic statement on the girl's part.

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to give a simplified picture of what marriage means financially, how young men enter the game, and the kinds of human involvements that may result. From even this brief résumé of the situation it becomes evident how firmly wealth and marriage, sex and frustration must merge in the minds of young Atimelangers.

ROMANCE AND SEX IN MARRIAGE

That there is such a thing as romantic love is evident from the foregoing. However, it is equally evident that this is not the term in which the institution is phrased by the culture. In this, of course, the Atimelangers reverse our romantic formulation of marriage. I have the impression that a stubborn romantic attachment like Senlaka's is a definite liability, since it makes him more susceptible to financial pressure.

In discussing the sexual and romantic aspects of courting and marriage it is worth noting how consistently the men's autobiographies report that women took the initiative. It is often they who suggest that tokens such as shawls, bracelets, and the like be exchanged. It is the girls who are supposed to ask men for areca, which is symbolic at least of friendship, and often of actual courting. They flock as eagerly as boys to the all-night dances, which often offer excellent opportunities for finding partners. Dances consist of a circle of people standing close and moving sidewise with arms thrown over each other's shoulders or around the partners' waists. There is every opportunity to select the partner of one's choice and to have close physical contact with him. The men, in speaking of marriage, often present themselves as passive pawns of women's or older men's designs. Such a picture might be more convincing if it were substantiated by the women's autobiographies and if the flirting, philandering, and recriminations of everyday life did not in part contradict it. The actual situation probably varies with individuals. The point to be noted is that initiative in contracting a marriage is not even theoretically denied to women.

In both sexes the striking thing brought out in the autobiographies is the ease with which loved persons may be surrendered. It is a character trait consistent with the supposition made at the end of the section on late childhood, namely, that there are few opportunities in Atimelang life for the establishment of secure and permanent relationships and little expectation of, or insistence upon, them. This is far from saying that they never occur. There are several couples who have established what would be considered in any culture devoted and lasting marital

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578 602 cant, however, is that twenty-five of the thirty-six kin quarrels were between affinal kin including husbands and wives, co-wives, and more remote affinal relatives.

152 In all these outbursts of rage I never saw an Atimelanger lose his temper at an inanimate object. Even at animals they shout loudly and harshly but without the sense of real anger that is evidenced toward human beings. This suggests for one thing a less anthropomorphic cast of mind than among ourselves. For another it suggests no very powerful reserves of anger and no latent hostilities of such magnitude that they take any avenue of discharge, regardless of reality. Also, it may be attributable to the far greater ease and frequency of partial discharge of anger permitted by the society. These suggestions are substantiated further by the brevity of sulking periods. Sulking does occur and there is no doubt that grudges are held, but only in rare cases do they last for more than two or three days. The long periods often required to reach an agreement place a premium on being able to maintain a certain pitch of anger. At the end of a prolonged litigation anger has so far evaporated that the winner will willingly kill a chicken or a pig to eat with his opponents and the judge.

154 535 There are a number of more or less formalized outlets for anger that help to drain off the frustrations and humiliations associated with the social system. All-night dances end at dawn with the challenge dances (*dokak*) between men who dash back and forth in pairs across the dance place brandishing swords at each other.

There is also a rattan switch dance (*dengdema*) between young men, in which one partner stands as impassively as possible with one leg thrust forward while the other dancer, after many preliminary feints and flourishes with a rattan switch, hits him with as much force as possible on the shin bone. From one to five blows are given and then the partners change roles. It is significant in relation to the general gravity with which bloodshed is regarded that drawing blood is bad form and cause for offense. Anyone who draws blood by mistake usually hastens to apologize.

[574]

Such switch dances sometimes become expressions of intervillage hostility so that series of partners are often from two opposing villages. The degree to which this dance contest is really a hostile act is evident from the number of older people who tend to discourage it and from the fact that the accompanying gongs are played in the rapid, staccato fashion used in times of crisis. It would be a mistake to interpret the dance as primarily an exercise in physical fortitude, although fortitude in this case is a matter of pride. Fortitude is not a particularly

[533]

[181]

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prized virtue in the culture, as we have seen in connection with the education of children and as was abundantly evidenced in cases of illness and wounds. An interesting episode happened one day when an older financier, Maliseni, suggested dancing with young men in this fashion, but offered to pay two cents for each blow instead of receiving return blows. There was some debate among the young men as to the worth of this offer and it was finally rejected. This was apparently too new an extension of the aggression-wealth concept to be generally acceptable.

In the delivery of large dowry payments (*moling*) there is a mock verbal battle in which the female kin of the wife and husband exchange insults about the value of the gifts being given. The men often join these debates. Frequently they are purely formal and are carried out in a mood of chaffing good humor and with much amusement. At other times there may be serious ill feeling expressed and a genuine attempt made to shame the husband and his kin into more generous gifts to the carriers of the dowry payments.

When feelings become intense, particularly between two kin, a drastic expression of hostility is to swear a curse against one's opponent. These curses vary from mild pronouncements of noncooperation in the future to actual death penalties by leprosy or some other form of dread disease. These curses can be removed by countersacrifices, and usually are, when peace is restored. They are pronounced seemingly in the heat of a quarrel and are subsequently regretted. The curse placed on Fantan by his wife (see autobiography, page 374) is a case in point.

WEALTH CONTESTS

The expression of hostility through wealth has been touched upon in connection with marriage. There are two other forms of institutionalized wealth combats. One is a sort of wealth contest called *tasah* and the other is a type of fine by challenge and shame called *kalukek*. Both of these devices are used only rarely. The realistic hardheadedness of the Atimelang financier does not foster any abuse of these devices.

No wealth contests (*tasah*) occurred during my period of residence in the village, so that I am dependent upon hearsay accounts. During eighteen months there were, however, at least two such threats, which did not materialize. Within the last twenty years probably not more than three such outbursts have occurred in the Five Villages. A condensed and simplified account of one of the most elaborate of these wealth contests is given below.

Maleata was a young man who had married Maliseni's sister, Kol-

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tributing pigs to both sides. Women were hiding piglets in the houses so that all the animals would not be killed." 556 578

Then the Male House I* of each chief contestant decided to meet and reckon their tallies. They set up forked tree branches on neutral ground between the two villages. The young men of both sides met there and fought. They pushed and tugged and sparred with clubs. When they finished fighting, the Male House representatives of each side took two tallies apiece and tossed them into the air, saying, "Moon-Sun, we give you these two tallies. If our side is at fault, may our tallies be fewer. If our side is right, hide the tallies of our opponent; make ours flow in like water." 602

Then each side began laying down tallies. Maliseni's representatives would put down one and Mangma's representatives would lay one on top of it. When Maliseni's tallies were finished, Mangma's side still had many. Then Mangma's side shouted a formal gloat, "Sapaliek! The rooster's tail droops! You are a voiceless night bird. Our lineage house's taproot goes down deep. You were mistaken." Then they all danced challenge, saying, "Hik, hik! my friend Maliseni, sit quietly; don't talk. We are the ones to talk. We are a bird with a bell-like voice; you are a silent night bird."

After this climax of the contest there was an all-night dance. At dawn the winners gave to their six Male House kin for their services a series of graded payments that amounted to about twenty-five dollars in gongs and mokos plus various pigs and a sword. In addition, all the pigs used had to be paid for. 535 602 437

For five years after this event Maliseni and his rivals avoided each other. Finally the winners sent a go-between to Maliseni with offers of a peacemaking feast on the spot where the reckoning had taken place. Here the principals exchanged areca, rice cones, and meat. Each side ate the other's food, and peace was restored. At least the contestants no longer avoided each other. 578

This particular contest broke out over an affinal exchange. It involved many people who had no particular interest in losing the pigs they were raising for other purposes. It failed also to settle the hostility between Maliseni and some of his opponents. About ten years later the rivalry broke out once more, this time between Maliseni and Malefani, one of Mangma's and Maleata's chief supporters. This time the precipitating factor was that Malefani's three young sons refused to let Maliseni join them in a rat hunt. Maliseni was angry and shouted at the boys, "I'll hit you if you don't wish me to go with you. Go copulate with a 556 578

* See page 21.

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432 727 262 431 602 765 is, the closest lineal kin of the murdered man receives from the sellers gifts of which he does not partake, whereas the more distant Male House kin may eat freely of the food. This parallels the procedure in death feasts, at which close kin of the dead refuse food. After this lifting of taboos, payments are in order, but, as in the payoff of death feast obligations, they may not be made for many years. This preliminary procedure is simply a token of an obligation undertaken. In 1938 and 1939 there were still such outstanding obligations awaiting settlement, although no heads had been taken for at least twenty years.

727 766 If an enemy kills a man but does not have a chance to decapitate him, the home village of the victim itself decapitates him, puts the head in an ash-filled basket, and hangs it in a bamboo thicket or on a remotely located platform. Before putting it aside, however, the six potential buyers of revenge shoot arrows into the head of their kinsman and urge his soul to go out and find six sellers, that is, six avengers. The head is "fed" every few days and whenever it smells food it is supposed to cry. This assures the kin that the head is still there and that it has not been stolen by an enemy for resale.

727 682 In all this system of revenge the head is actually of minimal importance. One can sell the fact of a death without producing the head. On the other hand, any head will do if a lineal kin wishes to buy one and make an honorific (i.e., financial) settlement for a death. In such a case, a stolen head will do as well as any other.

727 432 At the payoff for the head the sellers must first be appeased, and, as in all financial settlements of this sort, there are hours and hours of haggling, of derogations, of threatened withdrawals, and of attempted chicanery. When claims of the various ranks of creditors have been met, the climax of the ceremony is to bring the head onto the dance place. Since the real head has usually long since disintegrated or been lost, a cowrie shell or a stone wrapped in coconut fiber can be substituted. The bundle is woven into a closed coconut-leaf container like those made for cooking raw rice and is lashed to the end of a pole. A volunteer, who is paid a small fee, stands with the pole and its bundle on the village boundary. He calls the buyers to come fetch the sellers and the bundle. The buyers and their female kin assemble in full regalia in front of the head bundle and begin "dancing" it into the village.

535 432 727 The dance is a vigorous challenge dance resembling the gestures used by men in debate. This dancing of an object into the village is also used for house posts, valuable mokos, spirit-bird bundles, and any prized objects. The sellers follow this procession. Once on the dance

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place, the wielder of the pole begins switching the bundle rapidly back and forth as he circles the dance place six times. He is surrounded by the buyers, who try to beat the head bundle as it flicks back and forth. At the end of the sixth round the buyers seize the pole and bundle, rush to the village edge, and toss the bundle off into the bush, where no further attention is paid to it. Now the dead kinsman has a "spouse" (i.e., the fellow victim) and will not return to make trouble for his living kin. The thrashing given the head bundle is supposed to kill the spirit of the spouse so that it too will no longer be a menace.

The final ceremonial gesture is the mock feeding of the buyers. They stand in a row on their dance place and a piece of rice cone is offered them. They pretend to take a bite, but actually the rice is rapidly passed over their shoulders to children standing behind each buyer, who run off and eat it secretly. This appeases the dead kinsman. The same procedure is repeated by the sellers on the village boundary. This appeases the spouse of the dead kin.

It is consistent with the picture drawn so far of food and finance that the malignancy even of souls cannot be fully appeased until gestures of this sort are made. The cost of such appeasement must act to curtail excessive head-hunting. The financial costliness of placating the dead is true also for the ordinary death feasts and for the spirit-bird ceremonies that replace the death feast series in cases of violent deaths. This latter type of ceremony parallels in form that just described for a human head. There are three or four species of small birds which, when killed and dried, may be sold as spouses for those dead from accident or from dysentery, leprosy, or smallpox. It is important in terms of local values that even though a man has caught a spirit bird he may not use it to appease his own dead kin, but must buy one from some other set of six captors.

An instance of nice adjustment occurred when the Dutch put an end to head-hunting. Spirit-bird ceremonies were substituted for head ceremonies where vengeance had not yet been secured, so that the soul of the murdered man could be appeased. The Alorese were caught by cultural changes between the fear of their dead kin and the living Dutch. Fortunately they had at hand a ceremonial device they could, and were willing to, substitute in order to avoid this dilemma. If this device had not been available it is possible that the natives would have feared their dead more than the Dutch garrison and that head-hunting would not have ended so quickly and easily. As it was, the solution was probably as much of a relief to the natives as it was to the government.

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155 role of satellites, which is a partial abandonment of goal and a partial continuation of childhood patterns.

FINANCE AND ESTHETICS

517 533 536 It is interesting that there are only two areas in which men seem to achieve any degree of esthetic self-expression. Both are indirectly associated with finance. One is gong playing, the other is versification. It will be recalled that gongs are one of the currencies. Whole gongs (*fokung*) are not very fluid as currency since they are prized for ceremonial purposes. Broken gongs (*rai*) are used constantly as small change. Their values range from about fifty cents to several rupiahs. Gong playing begins in middle childhood and may continue throughout life. 533 More often the long, steady gong beating of death memorials (*sinewai*), of lineage house building, and so forth is turned over to boys and young men, but older men frequently experiment with new rhythms or set the pattern for an orchestra composed of mokos and gongs of different sizes.

538 The connection of versification with finance comes out more plainly than that of gong playing and finance. It is the only form of poetic expression possessed by the people. It is, in fact, practically the only attempt at literary expression of any sort. The preoccupation with finance and even its esthetic transmutations are evident from some of the verses quoted below. The dances last from eight or nine o'clock in the 535 evening until dawn the next day. They usually precede a ceremonial event, with its inevitable financial concomitants. The participants, facing inward, their arms about each other, form a circle on the dance place. They progress sideways.

Any man may begin a verse. The form in which he expresses himself has certain stereotyped limits and a set range of elaborate metaphors, but it is not so fixed that creative leeway is forbidden. As the soloist finishes a verse, he indicates a change in tempo. Thereupon all 539 the dancers join in one of the dozen or more set choruses characterized by syllables which are predominantly meaningless and slightly more rapid in beat. The ability to improvise is highly esteemed. Ambitious young men of seventeen or eighteen years first try to versify in this fashion. An inadequate performance is not publicly ridiculed, but there is a certain amount of snickering behind the performer's back. Those with real ability persist in their efforts and may be admired performers by the time they are in their late thirties or early forties. Abilities naturally vary. By rough estimate perhaps 10 per cent of the mature men are recognized as good singers. A few verses taken at random from